

(Belmont Better Times) winter 2004

Belmont Heritage Commission Update
By Wallace Rhodes

Belmont Selectmen finalized membership appointees to the Heritage Commission at their August 18th meeting.

As Chairman of the group, I am pleased to report their selection of residents Linda Frawley, Diane Marden and Margaret Normandin, Esquire along with Doralyn Harper, serving as Selectmen's representative. Ms. Frawley will serve as Vice Chairman and Attorney Normandin as secretary for the group, which held a first organizational meeting on November 17, 2004.

Belmont citizens approved establishment of a local Heritage Commission at the 2004 Town Meeting, as a petitioned warrant article, by voice vote on March 13th. On behalf of all residents that encouraged and supported this effort, please let me add a very special thanks. This initiative was enthusiastically endorsed by the Historical Society and members of the Conservation Commission, and was one of the many community goals recommended in the 2002 Master Plan update.

Our town has special and significant places that contribute to its rural character. The New Hampshire 1992 legislation establishing heritage commissions, provided new abilities to recognize and protect historic and cultural resources.

Many communities have historic districts, historical societies as well as heritage commissions. Importantly, heritage commissions take a townwide perspective, and not just one neighborhood, building or road. Additionally, heritage commissions can apply for foundation, technical assistance and other local grant support to foster local preservation projects.

Belmont has a unique tradition and legacy. From fertile farmlands and a 1792 area house for religious worship to a prominent mill town with its own railroad station, there are both stories and structures that illustrate community development over the years.

(continued)

Our heritage commission will volunteer time, thought and attention to sites and buildings - just as the conservation commission has focused on local land and natural resources. We look forward to serving Belmont citizens and promoting our historic community legacy.

(Wallace P. Rhodes is a former Belmont Historical Society President, current Historian for the society and author of "Reminiscences of A New Hampshire Town" compiled for the Belmont Centennial of 1969.)